Visual Vocabulary: Engage Students with Critical Thinking Instead of Memorization

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Disclosure Statement

• Beth Lawrence and Deena Seifert are speech-language pathologists and co-founders of Communication Apptitude, Inc. They created InferCabulary and WordQuations.

• Communication Apptitude, Inc. benefits financially from sales of these products.
Welcome!

Participants will:

• Describe best practice vocabulary instruction
• Demonstrate understanding of Semantic Reasoning
• Create InferCabulary and WordQuations lessons
Importance of Vocabulary
Silverman & Hantraft, 2015
Students who enter kindergarten with low vocabulary

Perform poorly academically

At risk traditional methods

Loftus et al., 2010
For academic success, 12th graders need to know

Proctor, Silverman, Harring, & Montecillo, 2012
High-achieving 12th graders know (only 4% of students)

Eide, 2011
Why is vocabulary important?

• 2/3 of students in the U.S. struggle with reading comprehension and vocabulary is the building block for comprehension.

• Students need to understand 95-98% of the words in a given text independently to comprehend text.*

• It’s one of the 5 pillars of reading.**

*Hu & Nation, 2000
**Reading First (Title I, Part B, Subpart 1), 2000 National Reading Panel
Breadth vs. Depth

- **Breadth**: number of lexical entries (predicts decoding)
  
  - Ouellette & Beers, 2010

- **Depth**: semantic representations for each known word (predicts comprehension)
  
  - Walley, Metsala, & Garlock, 2003
Two Phases

Fast Mapping
(Breadth)

Extended Mapping
(Depth)

A child’s ability to learn a new word or concept with minimal exposure to it
the number of words—at any given time—an elementary/middle school student is in process of learning "deeply"

Carey & Bartlett, 1978
Vocabulary Struggles
The Problem

Using language to teach language to students who struggle with language...
Why do kids struggle?

- Kids are not reading as much or have reading disabilities
- Not everyone is using instruction that incorporates **best practices**
- Students have **limited exposures** to words in a variety of contexts
- Learning words is a **neurological process**
- Language disorders/learning disabilities
Vocabulary Instruction Must Emphasize

1. Active engagement
2. Multiple contexts
3. Using visuals
4. Morphology (parts of words)
5. Semantics (graphic organizers)
6. Kinesthetic (drama)
7. Repetition

Beck & McKeown, 2013
Another Best idea
## Two Vocabulary Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>InferCabulary®</th>
<th>WordQuations®</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nouns and adjectives</td>
<td>verbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uses Semantic Reasoning</td>
<td>formula for determining subtle meanings of verb synonyms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>higher order vocabulary skills</td>
<td>character motivation and verb choices in writing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Using features of verbs to understand verb synonyms
Inspiration For WordQuations
Examples of *glance* from *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry

“Her mother shook her head quickly, and **glanced** at the open window covered only by the sheer curtain. Annemarie understood.”

“Another man arrived: an old man, bearded. Quietly he went to the living room and sat down, saying nothing to the others, who only **glanced** at him.”

“Annemarie did instantly as she was told. The basket. The packet, at the bottom. She covered it with a napkin. Then some wrapped cheese. An apple. She **glanced** around the kitchen saw some bread and added that. The basket was full.”
Break down the synonym into an equation

\[ \text{glance} = \]

Base word + speed + degree + emotion or motive

look + quickly + short + curious hurried unimportant
To look quickly at something because you are curious
Now for a little practice
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Base Word</th>
<th>Speed</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Motive \ Emotion</th>
<th>Synonym</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>walk</td>
<td>slowly</td>
<td>gently powerfully</td>
<td>to explore, Feeling, relaxed</td>
<td>meander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>talk</td>
<td>quickly</td>
<td>Loudly quietly</td>
<td>worried, confused, oblivious</td>
<td>babble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>touch</td>
<td>slowly</td>
<td>gently powerfully</td>
<td>to comfort, show, love, greet</td>
<td>embrace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>look</td>
<td>quickly</td>
<td>short</td>
<td>anger</td>
<td>flash</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Low tech method using sticky notes or index cards
Using Semantic Reasoning Skills to Learn Word Meanings
Typical Dictionary Definition

**prudent**

[prood-nt]

**adjective**

Wise or judicious in practical affairs; sagacious; discreet or circumspect; sober

Process: Rote memorization of 11th grade words in definition to “learn” a 6th grade word

Results: Students forget definition after test
Visuals with Verbal
The Inspiration for InferCabulary®
We devised InferCabulary® as a method to avoid using language (the students’ primary weakness) as the initial method to teach vocabulary meaning for nouns, adjectives, and adverbs.
InferCabulary®

Demonstration
Copies of this presentation, handouts and research are available on InferCabulary.com

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